

Multifamily Tenant Characteristics System (MTCS)



Getting Started Guide
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1. Introduction

As you start to use MTCS, this guide will teach you some of the fundamental skills necessary to leverage MTCS data. This guide will help the user:

- Access the Web
- Obtain user IDs and passwords
- Understand access privileges
- Understand security and privacy
- Login to MTCS
- Use MTCS report data

2. Access MTCS

For PHAs to access the MTCS application and web site, they need to have certain hardware and software. All PHAs need a **modem**, **Internet service provider** (ISP), and a **browser** that supports:

- Secure Socket Layer protocol (SSL 3.0)
- Javascript
- Form-based file upload
- HTML tags and attributes specified in HTML 3.2 standard

* The speed of the modem and the type of browser determine the amount of time it takes to transmit Form HUD-50058 family data and retrieve and print MTCS reports. The latest version of a particular browser and a high baud rate (28.8K or 56.6K) modem will help decrease the time it takes to access the web site, send data, and retrieve reports.

2.1 User IDs and Passwords

To access the secure MTCS application, you need to obtain a user ID and password. To obtain a password:

1. **PHA employees** should contact the MTCS Hotline to obtain a user ID and password:

1-800-FON-MTCS

A PHA can request multiple MTCS IDs. With the addition of a three-digit extension to the primary ID number, the PHA can use sub-IDs to have multiple users process Form HUD-50058 data at the same time. If PHAs have any questions on how to use sub-IDs, they should contact the MTCS Hotline.

2. **HUD personnel** should contact their local MTCS Administrator. If you do not know your MTCS Administrator, contact Tom Williams at Thomas_J._Williams@hud.gov. If you currently have an MTCS user ID, continue to use that ID. Note that HUD Unisys mainframe ID and password will not work to access MTCS via the Internet.

HUD personnel need a Unisys mainframe ID and password for *Individual Access*. To obtain these, contact your local ADP officer.

- * You are not required to have a user ID and password to access the MTCS web sit

2.2 Access Privileges

Your password determines your level of access to MTCS reports. Access privileges protect the privacy of families who participate in rental subsidy programs. The table below (Figure 2.1) defines the access privileges of HUD Headquarters, Field Offices, and PHAs.

Figure 2.1 MTCS Report Access Privileges

	Summary Reports (All)	Summary Reports (Section 8)	Detailed Reports
Headquarters	Yes	Yes	Yes
Field Offices	Yes	Yes	FO Only
Public Housing Agencies (PHAs)	Yes*	Yes*	PHA Only

*Key Management Indicators, Over/Under-Housed, Citizenship, and Income Summary reports are only available at the PHA level and project level where applicable.

2.3 Security and Privacy

Access privileges protect sensitive family information. Family data in MTCS is subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act of 1992. Therefore, unauthorized access, use, or disclosure of sensitive demographic information poses a security risk.

To adhere with privacy guidelines, you should never:

1. Leave your desk when logged into the MTCS system
2. Leave Form HUD-50058 data or reports in plain sight
3. Allow others to login with your ID and password

* To maintain tenant privacy, MTCS suppresses data on the MTCS reports if the section criteria yields less than ten families. You will see "***" to indicate insufficient data on the report lines.

2.4 Access MTCS Web Site

The MTCS web site provides one-stop shopping for the MTCS user community through information, documentation, and on-line question and answer forums. Through the MTCS web site, users can access the MTCS application.

To find the MTCS web site, go to:

<http://www.hud.gov/pih/systems/mtcs/pihmtcs.html>

To access MTCS, use your mouse to click on the words '**Access MTCS**'

The *MTCS Login Menu* appears on your screen.

2.5 MTCS Login Menu

At the *Login Menu*,

- Use your mouse to place your cursor in the 'User ID' field
- Type in your user ID
- Press the [Tab] key to move your cursor to the 'Password' field
- Type in your password
- Use your mouse to click the word '**Login**'

OR

- Press the [Tab] key until the word '**Login**' is highlighted
- Press the [Enter] key

The *MTCS Main Menu* appears on your screen.

2.6 Change your password

From the *Login Menu*,

- Use your mouse to place your cursor in the 'User ID' field
- Type in your user ID
- Press the [Tab] key to move your cursor to the 'Password' field

Type in your password

- Use your mouse to click the words '**Change Password**'

OR

- Press the [Tab] key until the words '**Change Password**' are highlighted
- Press the [Enter] key

The *Change MTCS Password Menu* appears on your screen.

- Use your mouse to place your cursor in the '**Enter New Password**' field
- Type in your new password

Passwords are six to eight alpha or numeric characters in length and are not case sensitive

- Press the [Tab] key to move your cursor to the '**Re-enter New Password**' field
- Type in your new password again
- Use your mouse to click the '**Change**' button

A confirmation message appears on your screen.

- Use your mouse to click the words '**Main Menu**'

The *Main Menu* appears on your screen.

- * MTCS will prompt you to change your password the first time you login to the application.
- * MTCS notifies you every 365 days (annually) when your password expires

2.7 MTCS Main Menu

The *MTCS Main Menu* has several options:

- MTCS reports
- Delinquency report
- Section 8 Deconcentration Analysis
- Ad Hoc Selection
- Ad Hoc Individual Access
- Transmission Information
- Send File
- Next Day Download Data

Use your mouse to select the option that meets your needs.

* For instructions on 'Send File,' please see the Data Transmission Guide at:

<http://www.hud.gov/pih/systems/mtcs/document.html>

3. MTCS Report Applications

In this section, we try to answer the questions MTCS users often ask:

- How can these reports help me?
- How can I use the information contained in these reports to solve problems, analyze issues, and make decisions?

We provide users with a list of key data fields for each MTCS report and specific examples of how HUD Headquarters, Field Offices, Troubled Agency Recovery Centers (TARCs), and PHAs can use MTCS reports.

HUD intends users to challenge information contained in MTCS reports because often, upon further investigation, the problems or issues may be different than they appear in MTCS. Use MTCS data and reports as a starting point for discussion, investigation, research, and analysis.

3.1 PHA Uses for MTCS Reports

MTCS reports serve a variety of different PHA needs. PHAs can use MTCS reports to improve management, planning, and operations:

- **Monitor and assess performance**

MTCS reports provide PHA management with useful data to monitor program implementation or identify areas for improvement. PHAs can use data in MTCS reports to organize workloads, priorities, and identify management issues. To provide additional perspective on PHA performance, MTCS allows a PHA to compare its organization to other PHAs' at the national, state, metropolitan statistical area, and county levels. PHAs can also assess their management and operational performance on a project-by-project basis from MTCS reports.

- **Plan and administer programs**

PHAs can use MTCS reports to develop their PHA plans. MTCS reports provide useful tenant income, rent, and demographic data to help a PHA plan for future modernization activity or comply with deconcentration and income targeting requirements. For example, MTCS reports can help a PHA identify a shift in the market for a particular project, which may prompt the PHA to consider a change in its income targeting efforts. PHAs can also use MTCS reports to highlight programmatic or management weaknesses at different projects and target improvement efforts.

- **Respond to community requests for information**

PHAs often receive requests for information about subsidized rental housing programs in their community. PHAs can use MTCS summary reports to share valuable information about the demographic profile of their programs with local public officials, partners, and community groups. Remember dissemination of individual family information is subject to the Privacy Act of 1992.

- **Solve problems and analyze issues**

MTCS reports can provide PHAs with useful data to support decision-making and problem-solving activities:

- **Determine adequacy of Fair Market Rents (FMRs) and payment standards:** MTCS reports provide information on gross rents compared to FMRs, total tenant payment, and rent burden. This information can help PHAs analyze the adequacy of their FMRs, payment standards, and determine the possible need for locality exception FMRs.
- **Determine adequacy of utility allowances:** Although utility allowances do not necessarily change each year, PHAs must determine annually the appropriateness of their utility allowance. MTCS reports allow a PHAs to compare the utility allowances of PHAs in similar climates and housing stocks to identify allowances that seem inconsistent or unusual.
- **Determine adequacy of space allocations:** PHAs can use MTCS reports to monitor enforcement of PHA occupancy standards or compare their policies against HUD's occupancy guidelines. MTCS reports provide data that show families that appear to be over- and under-housed tenants in the Unit Assignment Discrepancy Report. Further review by a PHA might reveal that some of those families experienced a change in household composition during occupancy or the PHA may have misreported the family unit size at admission.

- **Comply with fair housing and equal opportunity requirements**

PHAs should ensure that all eligible households have access to PHA programs without regard to race, ethnicity, age, family status, or disability. The New Admissions report is one example of an MTCS report that provides demographic information on new admissions to the PHA. The report can reveal possible admission biases and helps the PHA to assess the success of its outreach efforts. PHAs can use this type of information to monitor their compliance with HUD's fair housing and equal opportunity regulations.

3.2 HUD Uses for MTCS Reports

HUD Headquarters, Field Offices, and TARC use MTCS reports in a myriad of ways. HUD Field Offices and TARC use MTCS reports to monitor PHAs in their jurisdiction. MTCS reports provide useful data for Field Offices and TARC to evaluate PHA management practices, operations, and compliance with HUD regulations:

- **Assess PHA performance and monitor quality**

Field Offices and TARC use MTCS reports to monitor PHAs enforcement of HUD program rules and PHA reporting rates. MTCS reports help HUD staff verify, for example, that PHAs conduct timely annual re-examinations and Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections. HUD staff can access MTCS reports to:

- **Support remote monitoring activities:** Field Offices and TARC often must rely on remote monitoring to oversee PHA activities. Field Office and TARC staff can review MTCS reports to know, for example, who the PHA admits to its programs, how long applicants wait for assistance and the accuracy of PHA rent calculations. MTCS reports provide Field Office and TARC staff with data to discuss these issues with PHAs.
- **Support on-site reviews:** On-site reviews are time-consuming, but Field Office and TARC staff can be more productive and less disruptive to the PHA if they review MTCS reports in advance. With the data in MTCS reports, HUD staff can prepare background information about PHA activities and identify problem areas prior to a site visit.
- **Monitor PHA compliance with HUD regulations:** Field Offices and TARC use MTCS reports, like the HA Delinquency report, to determine if PHAs comply with Notice PIH 99-2. Notice PIH 99-2 requires PHAs to report a minimum of 85 percent of public housing and combined Section 8 certificate and vouchers data to MTCS.

- **Plan and administer programs**

For Field Office and TARC staff, MTCS reports help identify management or operational issues to address with PHAs through training or technical assistance. They can use MTCS reports to obtain documentation for budget reviews and funding decisions. MTCS also provides HUD staff with statistics needed to complete the Business and Operating Plan (BOP).

- **Support public information**

HUD staff use MTCS reports to respond to requests for information about subsidized rental programs from congressional offices, federal agencies, research organizations, local officials, and the general public. To support these types of requests, HUD staff to prepare assisted housing profiles that consist of demographic and income statistics summarized on MTCS reports like the Resident Characteristics report. MTCS also offers the general public Resident Characteristics report to all interested parties via the Internet.

- **Disseminate best practices**

If a PHA struggles to manage or operate an aspect of its program, MTCS reports help Field Office and TARC staff identify PHAs with similar programs. Field Offices and TARC can support the PHA to learn best practices from other PHAs. MTCS reports can identify, for example, which PHAs handled large Section 8 portability programs or had a significant number of families successfully complete the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program.

- **Support fair housing reviews**

MTCS reports help HUD staff assess PHA activities from a fair housing perspective based on family composition information and data on the age, race, sex, ethnicity, and disability of the head of household. MTCS reports provide descriptive data that helps HUD staff to consider if a PHA treats households consistently

and if PHA policies create a disparate impact (intended or unintended) based on race, age, ethnicity, or disability.